



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2009

No. 144

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign Lord of history, as good and faithful people serve and struggle for the path of justice and peace, give them light for the way and strength for the day. Defend them against any deterrent to responsible statesmanship, any compromise that sacrifices principle or violates conscience.

Lord, infuse them with a grace and wisdom that will measure personal conviction in the light of truth and courage. May each Senator act consistent with enlightened conscience however costly to personal ambition.

In disagreement, give our lawmakers the wisdom to respect opposing views and a willingness to be flexible when the good of the people and the ripeness of the issues become clear. Shine Your hope into their lives to brighten the darkness of discouragement as You remind our Senators that their times are in Your hands.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 7, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, and the Republicans will control the second 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled during today's session.

SENATE TRADITION OF RECITING THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate is nothing if not a temple to tradition. We debate and we deliberate according to the same rules where Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and John C. Calhoun considered the future of this young Nation. We vote without the help of modern electronics, as the first Senators did. We refer to each other in the third person during even the most heated discussions.

Senators take pride in the desks they occupy. Senator Ted Kennedy surrendered his rights as a senior member of the body at one time to move closer to the front so he could share the same desk in which his two brothers' names are inscribed.

On the top of those desks, we still keep the same inkwell. Mine has paper clips in it now. But this is an inkwell. It has been there since we moved to this Chamber and even before.

Also, we have something from the past. There is a spittoon. Most all Senators chewed tobacco and did a lot of spitting. But we still have these here. I use mine to throw a few pieces of wastepaper in it. But it is traditional. That is the Senate.

There are other things that can be referred to if Senator BYRD were here. He is an expert. In fact, he is the custodian of Senate traditions. He can add countless more examples. I could add a few more, but Senator BYRD could add an endless list.

Last week, the Republican leader and I spoke here about the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag. When we first came to the Senate—Senator MCCONNELL and this Senator—there was no Pledge of Allegiance before we started our sessions.

So today I will speak of one of our new traditions which we have observed daily for more than a decade and, again, just a few minutes ago when we recited the pledge. It has not always been this way.

The sentence itself, barely more than 30 words long, is not even 120 years old. The pledge was born like many American rituals, out of capitalism. It was written by a children's magazine trying to sell American flags on the 400th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas.

The magazine sought to sell flags to every school in the country, and a minister and author named Francis Bellamy penned the pledge to promote unity among schoolchildren as the Nation reeled from the recent Civil War.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S10171